



HEARTWOOD

Public Charter School

Heartwood Public Charter School

Proposed by the Heartwood Foundation, 2017, updated 8/20/18

Contents

Introduction

- a. Educational Mission & Vision Statement
 - b. Governance & Organizational Structure & Plan
 - c. Methods by Which Board of Trustees & Their Terms are Determined
 - d. General Description & Proposed or Potential Location of Facilities to be Used
 - e. Maximum Number, Grade or Age Levels
 - f. Curriculum
 - g. Academic & Other Learning Goals & Objectives
 - h. Achievements & Assessments
 - i. High School Graduation Requirements
 - j. Staffing Overview
 - k. Personnel Compensation Plan
 - l. Pupil Transportation Plan
 - m. Statement of Assurances Related to Non-Discrimination
 - n. Special Education Coordination Method
 - o. Admission Procedures
 - p. Philosophy of Pupil Governance & Discipline
 - q. Administering Fiscal Accounts & Reporting
 - r. Annual Budget, Including All Sources of Funding
 - s. School Calendar Arrangement
 - t. Evidence of Accurate Insurance Coverage
 - u. Consultants & Friends of the Charter
 - v. Philosophy of Parent Involvement
 - w. Information Dissemination
 - x. A Global Hold-Harmless Clause
 - y. Severability Provisions & Statement of Assurance
 - z. Provision for Dissolution of the Charter
 - aa. Information Related to Conversion of a Public School
 - bb. Cessation of School
 - cc. Proposed Contracts with Local Schools
 - dd. Proposed Accountability Plan
- Appendix A: Founding Board of Trustee Biographies
Appendix B: Expenditure Budget
Appendix C: Sample Head of School Description
Appendix D: Friends of the Charter
Letters of Support

Introduction

Why Charter?

Heartwood Public Charter School creates an additional public school option for children and families looking for an alternative approach to their child's education in Coös County. A public charter school model is a good fit for this geographical area because it provides the needed flexibility to use new and innovative approaches for teaching and learning. With emphasis on connecting students with their greater community, our place-based model allows students to learn from the people and places around them while also helping to foster a greater understanding of the value of education within our community.

Why Coös County?

Northern New Hampshire is a region defined by its natural beauty, hardworking people, and tight-knit communities. However, Coös county is also a place of hardship, as many people struggle to make ends meet, access to healthcare and high quality food can be limited, and employment opportunities in our rural communities are sparse.

As members of our region have come together to try to heal our struggling communities, we have realized that it is this place itself and what makes the region unique that will ultimately spur revitalization. It is the clean and beautiful environment that will attract people to live and visit. It is our farming landscape that will feed us and lead the way in wellness. It is the safety and closeness of our neighborhoods that will attract young families. It is our people and the local economies we create that will keep our youth in the region. This place defines us and it is through our connectedness to it that we will flourish.

However, for our continued growth, for both businesses and young families to come and for our youth to stay, we need more. To prevent our youth from leaving the state, we need to invest in our children and in education. We need to engage our children in our local communities, to teach them that they are active participants of their communities and the world. For our children to value our local community, this place—we need to take actions to improve the quality of life here, making it a nicer place to learn, live, and work.

Considered the Gateway to the Great North Woods and home to the County Seat, Lancaster and its surrounding area provides a suitable location for an elementary place-based charter school. The White Mountains Regional School district (SAU 36) is comprised of five towns and 685 elementary students. There are 288 children under the age of five in our district alone, and 1,320 additional children under the age of five in the neighboring towns, all within 30 miles of Lancaster. We are also in very close proximity to the Vermont NEK School Choice District, made up of eleven border towns, who often send their children across the river to NH schools.

Why Place-Based Education?

Heartwood Public Charter School strives to help connect students to themselves, to each other, to their community, and their environment. Through this connectedness and by using the

community as our classroom, children will discover the impact that they can have locally. Place-based education gives children a voice as well as a sense of civic pride and responsibility. Through integrated academics children are immersed in their educational context in an authentic and experiential way. Through their years at Heartwood Public Charter School students will be in control of their own learning, actively engaging with their community, and looking for ways to improve the world that surrounds them.

What is Place-Based Education?

Place-based education is learning that is grounded in what is local—the unique people, happenings, history, economy, and culture of a particular place. Place-based education offers students a foundation in the nature, history, culture, and ecology of their own environments before moving on to broader subjects.

“Place-based education is the process of using the local community and environment as a starting point to teach concepts in language arts, mathematics, social studies, science, and other subjects across the curriculum. Emphasizing hands-on, real-world learning experiences, this approach to education increases academic achievement, helps students develop stronger ties to their community, enhances students’ appreciation for the natural world, and creates a heightened commitment to serving as active, contributing citizens. Community vitality and environmental quality are improved through the active engagement of local citizens, community organizations, and environmental resources in the life of the school” (Sobel, 2004).

Place-Based Education:

- Grows from the distinct natural and human environments that our students live in
- Is interdisciplinary by nature.
- Engages students in the community and simultaneously strengthens the community’s investment in our local education.
- Promotes community growth and creates active, involved, responsible citizens.
- Places equal value on the social, emotional, physical, and cognitive growth of students
- Promotes authentic learning with high expectations.
- Provides a space and opportunity for students to fully explore and discover themselves, others, and the world.
- Encourages deep connections to the natural world and community through in-depth, integrated learning.

Why a Place-Based Educational Framework?

Place-based education can "feed three birds with the same seed" as it addresses the integrated goals of:

- **Student Achievement:** Place-Based Education boosts students' engagement, academic achievement, and sense of personal efficacy as stewards of their local environment and community. It also can re-energize teachers.

- **Community Social and Economic Vitality:** Placed-based education forges strong ties between local social and environmental organizations and their constituencies in the schools and community, which helps to improve quality of life and economic vitality.
- **Ecological Integrity:** Through project-based learning, students make tangible contributions to resolving local environmental issues and conserving local environmental quality.
(www.promiseofplace.org/what-is-pbe/what-is-place-based-education)

(a) Educational Mission & Vision Statement

Educational Mission

Heartwood Public Charter School educates students through authentic place-based experiences, empowering them to find meaning, engage deeply, and think critically. By using our community as our classroom, students cultivate a love for learning and explore academics within meaningful contexts. We strive to develop inspired students who become stewards of the earth and active citizens of the world.

Educational Vision

At Heartwood Public Charter School we learn beyond our classroom walls. We provide opportunities for our students to build valuable relationships within our community through service, experiential learning, and an integrated curriculum. We believe our kind, self motivated, and empowered students will grow up to be compassionate, informed, and engaged citizens that will create healthy communities.

Guiding Values

- We believe respect for ourselves and others is essential to forming positive relationships.
- We believe kindness and gratitude are the foundations of a joyful life.
- We believe that a connection with the earth and life around us encourages action toward a positive impact.
- We believe a sense of community begins in the home and grows larger through the school experience. The student's community continues to widen as they grow and mature.
- We believe knowledge is not enough; action is key to making the world a better place.
- We value play and believe that students learn best at their own pace.
- We believe taking risks in a safe environment is an essential component of lifelong learning.
- We believe that an innate curiosity and love for learning should be nourished.
- We believe that every student can find their voice and have an impact on the world around them.
- We believe reflection on an experience is as important as the experience itself.

Educational Goals

- Cultivate a thriving school culture that is embraced and supported by our community.
- Deliver an academic experience that exceeds the NH State Standards using place-based education.
- Establish mixed grade classrooms where peer-to-peer modeling and teaching is encouraged and supported.
- Provide differentiated instruction that guides, supports, and enables each student to succeed at their own pace.
- Shape an environment where students believe in themselves and are valued and validated.
- Help students find their voice, remain curious, and tap into their creative selves.
- Support and encourage the development of each student’s social-emotional intelligence.
- Support students in developing a sense of community that will expand and widen as they grow and mature.
- Use community service to foster a connectedness throughout our local region and our neighborhoods.
- Inspire students to become active shapers of culture, community, and society.

(b) Governance & Organizational Structure & Plan

The Founding Board of Trustees

Heartwood Foundation is a registered not-for-profit organization, established to create and sustain a public charter school in Coös county, New Hampshire. The current work of the foundation is to prepare the charter school application for approval, serve as an ambassador-organization in promoting the School, and select the first board of trustees of Heartwood Public Charter School. Following the approval of the charter and appointment of the school’s board of trustees, the purpose of the Heartwood Foundation will become one of support and development—for students, teachers, and the overall success of the school’s mission.

Brief biographical information of the initial Heartwood Foundation Board of Trustees —the 5 Founding Trustees—appears in Appendix A.

Board of Trustees

A board of trustees will govern the Heartwood Public Charter School with statutory responsibilities pursuant to RSA 194-B: 5 for “general supervisory control and authority over operations of the charter school.”

Day to day management of the school and staff members will be the responsibility of The Head of School. The Head of School will report directly to the Board of Trustees.

Heartwood Public Charter School's Board of Trustees will be the guardian of its Mission, charged, by definition, to establish the School, monitor its health and viability, advocate for the School and its students whenever possible, and assess, with regularity, the Mission's relevance and vitality.

Trustee selection will be based on personal and professional background as well as a commitment to the School's Mission, support, and sustainability.

The Board of Trustees will have officers, including: Chairperson, Vice Chairperson, Treasurer, and Secretary. Role descriptions for Board of Trustees officers will be developed by the Board of Trustees and approved as part of its operational guidelines. There will be 7 Trustees at a minimum, of which at least 2 will be parents of students currently enrolled.

The Board of Trustees will establish governing policies and bylaws, including policies that establish subcommittees and standing committees of the Board of Trustees. Initial subcommittees will likely include: Board of Trustees Recruitment, Finance, Marketing & Development, Curriculum, Student Recruitment, and Community Liaison, among others.

The Board of Trustees will hire and oversee the Head of School, with Board of Trustees Officers working most directly with this person. During the planning year, the Board of Trustees will establish roles reserved for the Head of School and those for the Board of Trustees. The Head of School will be empowered to direct and implement many operational decisions (e.g. day-to-day issues that arise in matters relating to curriculum, personnel, and daily school business and organization), but will always be responsible to the Board of Trustees, in ways clearly defined. As such, methods of communication and reporting will be established for a successful and productive relationship with the Head of School.

It is expected that the roles reserved for the Board of Trustees will include, at a minimum:

- Hiring of the Head of School
- Approval and oversight of annual budget and fund-raising programs
- Setting policy (e.g. code of ethics, personnel manual, etc.)
- Appointment of Board of Trustees advisory members
- Delineation of educational priorities
- Oversight for the School's growth plan
- Establishing a professional salary and compensation program
- Reviewing and approving significant contracts (e.g., for facilities and benefit programs)
- Oversight of major appeals
- Fundraising
- Any other matters prescribed in statute or rule.

The Board of Trustees will meet monthly during the school year to discuss School operations, hear reports, and take action as per its governance functions. The Officers may be called upon to meet more frequently. Decisions will be made by a majority vote of Trustees (a quorum) at each meeting.

The following principles of good practice for the Heartwood Public Charter School are based on guidelines from the National Association of Independent Schools. The Board of Trustees and the Head of School will work in partnership in fulfilling these principles.

1. The Board of Trustees shall oversee Heartwood Public Charter School's Mission and objectives.
2. The Board of Trustees shall review and maintain bylaws, and establish policies and plans consistent with the Mission.
3. The Board of Trustees shall be accountable for the financial well being of the School, including capital assets, operating budgets, fundraising, and endowments.
4. The Board of Trustees shall select and support the Head of School.
5. The Board of Trustees, or a committee of the Board of Trustees, shall conduct a written annual evaluation of the performance of the Head of School and work with the Head of School to establish goals for the following year.
6. The Board of Trustees shall evaluate itself annually and establish goals for the following year.
7. The Board of Trustees shall keep full and accurate records of its meetings, committees, and policies.
8. The Board of Trustees shall work to ensure that all of its Trustees are actively involved in the work of the Board of Trustees and its committees.
9. The composition of the Board of Trustees shall reflect a balance of expertise and perspectives needed to achieve the Mission of the School.
10. The Board of Trustees shall develop itself through ongoing education, new Head of School orientation, and leadership succession planning.
11. The Board of Trustees shall assure compliance with applicable laws and regulations and minimize exposure to legal action.

(c) Methods by Which Trustees & Their Terms are Determined

The Founding Board comprised of the 5 members of the Heartwood Foundation submitting this charter school application and overseeing the School's development, will appoint the School's initial Trustees. The Heartwood Foundation initial Board of Trustees will be appointed by Trustees of the sponsoring entity. Trustees of the *Heartwood Public Charter School* will have terms of three years. Terms of Trustees will be staggered. First-year Trustees will be appointed for two or three-year terms to establish initial staggered terms and governance stability. The Board of Trustees may appoint a Head of School to fill a vacancy if vacated, but that Trustees will only be allowed to serve until the original date expires. Trustees may serve consecutive terms if so voted by a Board of Trustees majority. The overarching goal in selecting Trustees is

finding individuals who support the Founders' vision and have a commitment to the School's Mission and goals. Founders will seek Board of Trustees members who bring professional expertise, including educational, financial, and governance experience to the Board of Trustees of the Heartwood Public Charter School.

Once the Board of Trustees is in place, current Trustees of Heartwood Public Charter School will select and appoint future Trustees and vote on policies for Board of Trustees governance and filling vacancies. For purposes of conducting business, the Board of Trustees will be subject to New Hampshire Right to Know Law, RSA 91-A. For purposes of lawful meetings, a quorum is defined as a majority of Trustees who must be physically present. Records and minutes of meetings will be kept in accordance with statutory guidelines. Trustees are expected to regularly attend Board of Trustees meetings. The Board of Trustees will consider regular participation to be crucial in order to ensure success of the Board of Trustees effort and the School overall.

Openings on the Board of Trustees will be filled by recommendation, nomination, and vote of a majority of the Trustees, keeping in mind the various stakeholder positions to be filled and a desire for diverse and balanced perspectives. Trustees elected to fill out the term of a Trustee will have a term that completes the remainder of the prior Trustee's term.

(d) General Description & Proposed or Potential Location of Facilities To Be Used

As mentioned above, the Founding Trustees have identified Lancaster, NH as the area best suited for our school's location. Although we have not finalized our facilities location at this time, we instead will share our vision for our school's atmosphere and physical space.

An ideal location for our school would be an existing facility or an area of land that would accommodate Heartwood as it grows and fulfills its maximum enrollment of 108 students. We envision a tranquil, natural site that is in close proximity to the center of town. Our classrooms and other indoor settings will be holistic spaces that will evoke feelings of warmth, simplicity, and comfort; they will facilitate learning, and will ultimately help guide our students toward success. We envision our classrooms to be visually quiet, with warm colors, natural materials and sunlight. We believe that our students will benefit from a well designed classroom, having a space that allows for the ease of movement and the flexibility for learning varied activities. Furthermore, ideally our school building will have a learning kitchen and a variety of other common spaces for meetings and gatherings.

In addition to utilizing many of the natural spaces at our disposal in our local geographic region, our campus will have outdoor classrooms, a natural playground, and plenty of green space. Ideally, each classroom will have its own entrance to the outdoors, which will serve as a gateway between our indoor and outdoor classrooms, where our students will continue their

education through nature studies, gardening, agriculture, play, and the community that surrounds them.

In accordance with RSA 194-B:8, II, any facility chosen to house the school will be brought up to code to comply with all state and federal health and safety laws, rules, and regulations, including but not limited to fire safety, HVAC, plumbing, electrical, and the requirements of ED 321.23(u) and (v). Upon state approval, we will develop and implement policies and procedures including a plan to ensure the safety of our students.

(e) Maximum Number, Grade or Age Levels

Enrollment & Growth Plan

The anticipated opening of Heartwood Public Charter School is Fall of 2019. We have a four year plan to add classrooms each year until we have 6 classrooms with grades K-8. In our first year, the school will serve students in Kindergarten in one classroom, grades 1-2 in a mixed grade classroom, and one 3rd grade classroom. In year two, we will add a mixed grade classroom with grades 4-5. In year three we will add a 6th grade classroom. In year four we will add grades 7-8 in a mixed grade classroom. We have strategically devised a system that alternates between single grade and mixed grade classrooms to best accommodate for the developmental needs of our students. Our maximum enrollment will be at full capacity of 108 students, with a total of 6 teachers, and 5 assistant teachers. In grades K-3 our staff:student ratios range from 1:6 to 1:12, grades 4-8 staff: student ratios range from 1:6-1:24 depending on classroom needs.

	Grade(s) Added	# of Students	Total Enrollment	# of Teachers	# of Aides
Year 1	K 1-2 3	12 24 12	48	1 1 1	1 1 1
Year 2	4-5	24	72	1	1 (float b/w 4-6)
Year 3	6	12	84	1	1 (float b/w 4-6)
Year 4	7-8	24	108	1	1 (float b/w 6-8)
Year 5	At capacity, no new classes or teachers added.				

Place-Based Learning Approach: Building the School Community

“Place-based education challenges the meaning of education by asking seemingly simple questions: Where am I? What is the nature of this place? What sustains this community? It often employs a process of re-storying, whereby students are asked to respond creatively to stories of their homeground so that, in time, they are able to position themselves, imaginatively and actually, within the continuum of nature and culture in that place. They become part of the community, rather than a passive observer of it.” (Lane-Zucker, 2016)

Our school will begin by filling the lower elementary classrooms in order to build a cohort of students familiar with place-based education before moving on to our upper elementary program. We anticipate that our students will have diverse backgrounds and varied learning styles. We have planned our growth with the following in mind:

- The need to grow at a reasonable and responsible rate to best serve and support our students, their families, our community, and our faculty and staff.
- The need to integrate all students into our Place-based methodology.
- The need to establish multi-grade classrooms with a maximum of 24 students with one lead teacher and one assistant teacher per classroom.

Our Students

Heartwood Public Charter School aims to be a welcoming community with a diverse student body. We understand that to be successful and sustainable we will need to start small and grow responsibly. We will provide and maintain resources that are necessary and beneficial for all of our students and their families, our teachers, and our school’s staff.

Shape and Size of Our Classrooms

Students are excellent teachers. Our classes and experiences are mixed grade—where students learn from each other, have older and younger peers, and assume leadership roles. We have found that a multi-grade environment encourages a community of collaboration and caring rather than exclusivity and competition.

Using a multi-grade approach, each class will develop into a supportive community where students will remain side by side, over time, and often with the same teacher. This method will create a close-knit atmosphere where student learning and growth can flourish.

Our student-teacher ratio will help shape our thriving classroom culture. In each lower and upper elementary classroom, we will aim to have twelve (12) students in single-grade classes, and twenty-four (24) in multi-grade classes. Each classroom will have one (1) Lead Teacher in the lower elementary grades, and share three (3) floating Assistant Teachers. The upper elementary will have one (1) Lead Teacher, and will share two (2) Assistant Teachers. Our student-teacher ratio will ensure that our students receive the individualized attention they need on a daily basis. These ratios allow for entire classroom collaborations and small-group work as well. We will have additional teacher presence as needed during growth years.

By year five we hope to have one (1) kindergarten classroom, two (2) lower elementary classrooms, one (1) upper elementary classroom, and two (2) middle school classrooms.

(f) Curriculum

Below we have portrayed the roles of our teachers, described the atmosphere our students will learn in, and have outlined the curriculum proposed for Heartwood Public Charter School.

Heartwood Public Charter School emphasizes the importance of our connections to our environment and our community, while nurturing the development of our students in a safe and caring environment. We will strive to nurture students who are authentically connected to their learning, their community, and their environment.

Through a child-centered view of learning, Heartwood Public Charter School will provide an in-depth, authentic, standards-based education. Utilizing local community resources, places, and people, our curriculum encourages students to participate in tangible experiences that help them to develop a sense of place. By design, our curriculum fosters community involvement and encourages the exploration of our natural surroundings. With both of these aspects of our program, our students will first learn about what is closest to them, with their explorations expanding in ever widening circles as they become more cognizant of their roles at school, their local communities, their state, their country, and the world.

Our child-centered philosophy recognizes that each child learns differently. We use an integrated curriculum, which focuses on making connections, allowing students to engage in relevant, meaningful learning that can be connected to real life. Through this integrated curriculum, we will utilize project-based problem solving, nature based learning, inquiry based learning, service learning, and collaborative learning. To provide a challenging and content-rich program, instructional methods (i.e. graphing a garden, literature circles, listening to and presenting oral histories) are used where teachers act as leaders, models, facilitators, and caregivers, and reflect our understanding that children learn through experience, exploration, social interactions, and guided inquiry.

Our teachers use exploratory and creative play, field work, inquiry, and modeling to varying degrees to guide students' development through their growth in social, emotional, physical, cognitive/intellectual abilities, social/civic responsibility, and self actualization. Teachers, along with support staff, parents, and the broader community, create a nurturing environment and help students to connect their experiences to authentic, real-world, community-based opportunities.

A Prepared Environment: Child-Centered Education & Active Learning

Heartwood Public Charter School believes students learn best in child-centered education and active learning. Learning materials and experiences are organized and made available to children in a prepared environment.

Teachers at Heartwood Public Charter School will have a non-traditional view of teaching and learning. We believe movement is more productive for students than sedentary learning, and because we respect and celebrate children's independence, teachers help students to progress at an individualized pace. We will utilize clear, individualized learning plans, in which one-on-one attention is embedded. Learning in math, language, science, history, geography, art, music, etc. may be undertaken by individual students, groups of learners, or individually with the support of the teacher. We believe this methodology of exploring materials and concepts deeply, independently or collaboratively, enables children to develop concentration, focus, and inner-discipline.

While the freedom of choice is fostered in what students want to learn, there are ground rules and clear expectations for both the students and the teachers in how the learning community should function.

Multi-Age Classrooms

Multi-age classrooms help children build maturity, promote leadership skills, and increase understanding of subjects when older classmates are able to educate one another. A shared culture of positivity and support, along with modeling work habits and social and language skills, guides children in developing a strong sense of self and an ability to work well with others. These are important skills students will need to be successful later in life.

The Teacher's Role: Observer & Guide

The teacher has many roles within the classroom. They design learning opportunities for individuals and groups in an environment in which materials are available and are presented as students are ready to progress. Teachers meet the needs of the whole child, physically, emotionally, socially, cognitively etc. while also ensuring there is documentation of the progress of that student, as well as all of those within the classroom.

Teachers know when to intervene, and when to observe and listen. Children are trusted and respected, and in turn, trust and respect themselves and others. In this way, teachers are able to support children toward their own success.

Guiding Children Toward Their Full Potential

The primary goal of Heartwood Public Charter School is to help each child reach his/her full potential in all areas of life, while also becoming lifelong learners, responsible citizens, productive members of the community, and protectors of their environment. It is our deepest hope that students experience learning at Heartwood Public Charter School as something to be loved and cherished, and done to follow one's own passions in life.

Emergent Curriculum

When children are engaged in activities that interest them, learning happens. Emergent curriculum begins with, and builds on, children's interests and experiences. The children

collaborate with teachers to determine the topic of study, with teachers participating in the learning alongside the children. The teacher's role is to listen to the children closely to determine their interests. The teacher then offers a plan (the curriculum) which scaffolds children's current understandings, and helps them to develop a deeper level of learning. Emergent curriculum is meant to be flexible and grow with open ended, playful activities, which expand children's understandings and bring real meaning to their questions. When teachers actively listen, nurture, and encourage children in their play, they are creating strong, confident, creative members of our community.

Inquiry & Constructivist Thinking

Inquiry is a student-centered form of active learning that begins by posing questions, problems, or scenarios instead of simply presenting established facts or portraying a smooth path to knowledge. Students are encouraged to ask questions which are meaningful to them, and which do not necessarily have easy answers. Instead of telling students what they "should" know or giving direct answers, teachers encourage students to think through problems by asking them questions.

Through the process of inquiry, students construct much of their understanding of the natural and human-designed worlds. Inquiry implies a premise of "need or want to know". It is not so much seeking the correct answer—often there is none—but, rather searching for appropriate resolutions to questions and issues. For educators, inquiry entails emphasizing the development of inquiry skills and the nurturing of inquiry attitudes or habits of mind that will enable students to continue the pursuit of knowledge throughout life.

Inquiry helps students develop:

- Self confidence in their learning ability
- Pleasure in problem solving
- A keen sense of relevance
- Reliance on their own judgment over other people's or society's
- No fear of being wrong
- No haste in answering
- Flexibility in point of view
- Respect for facts, and the ability to distinguish between facts and opinion

Inquiry also helps:

- Empower student voice and honor choice
- Increase student motivation and engagement
- Foster student curiosity and love for learning
- Teach grit, perseverance, growth mindset & self regulation
- Make research meaningful & develop strong research skills
- Reinforce the importance of asking good questions
- Enable students to take ownership over their own learning and to reach their goals

Fundamentally, constructivism theorizes that people build their own understanding and knowledge through experiencing the world and reflecting on those experiences.

Constructivism is a learning theory

- Learning is an active process
- Knowledge is constructed from (and shaped by) experience
- Learning is a personal interpretation of the world
- Problem solving and understanding are emphasized
- Authentic tasks, experiences, settings, and assessments are used
- Content is presented holistically—not in separate smaller parts

Differentiated Curriculum

Heartwood Public Charter School offers a differentiated educational program, designed to meet the unique needs of each student. At Heartwood, rather than simply assessing at the end of an instructional period, assessments are embedded into a teacher’s practice and are used to drive daily instruction. Instruction and assessment occurs in various groupings: individually, in small groups, and as a whole class. Teachers use a variety of materials and measures, and continually assess, to find out what their students already know, determine how and what they are learning, and establish what a student is ready to learn next.

Project Based

By embedding learning within a project, a student learns that skills, topics, and concepts do not exist by themselves. Through interdisciplinary projects, a student is challenged to apply and use knowledge in relevant and meaningful ways. A student learns from experience that cooperation, teamwork, communication, and conflict resolution within a group setting often produces a higher quality product or solution than working alone.

“Projects provide the backbone of the children’s and teachers’ learning experiences. The approach is based on the strong conviction that learning by doing is important and that to discuss and to revisit ideas and experiences leads to better understanding and learning.”
(Gandini, 1997)

The word project when used in the “project approach” has a specific meaning. “A project is an in-depth investigation of a topic worth learning more about. The investigation can be undertaken by a small group of children within the class, by the entire class, or by an individual child. The key characteristic is that the project is a research effort deliberately focused on finding answers to questions posed either by the children, the teacher, or the teacher working with the children (Katz, 1994).

The project approach addresses not only academic goals, but also intellectual goals. Intellectual goals focus on habits of mind that help children make sense of their world. Some habits of mind that relate to intellectual goals include the disposition to:

- Make sense of experience
- Theorize, analyze, hypothesize, and synthesize
- Predict and check predictions
- Find things out
- Strive for accuracy
- Experiment
- Grasp the consequences of actions
- Persist in seeking solutions to problems
- Predict others' wishes and feelings

Nature Based

Nature-based education is integral to the curriculum at Heartwood Public Charter School. Using the natural world as our classroom will enliven creativity, incite curiosity, and promote problem solving. Through exploration of our natural environment, our students can learn about any subject in a truly engaging way—the natural world serves as an ideal platform for both interdisciplinary and experiential learning.

As our students spend time outside in nature, they will be less overstimulated, they will be moving their bodies and breathing fresh air, and they will be happier and more focused. Through this sense of well-being and joy, we believe our students will learn more and develop a love for learning.

Nature-based education also connects students to the land both physically and emotionally, cultivating a sense of responsibility for the environment. Through the joy and deep connections made while learning and playing in the natural world, students will recognize their oneness with the natural world around them. It is through these connections that we hope to instill in our students an excitement for life and learning and a desire to care for and respect the land.

Community Based & Place-Based Learning

Students learn best when they are able to place learning in context, and are actively engaged in learning that pertains to their physical and social world. By relating learning to a student's place in the world, a student better understands why knowledge and skills are important. We work towards helping students to develop deep connections within their community, expand their appreciation for the world of nature while building on prior knowledge and experience, and develop an eagerness for serving as an active and committed citizen.

Interdisciplinary

In using project, nature, and community-based approaches, traditional disciplinary boundaries are often naturally dissolved, and students are able to think critically, generate ideas, and form & make connections. Interdisciplinary education allows students to see the value of what they are learning, increasing student engagement and motivation. In addition, an interdisciplinary approach provides the platform for students to meet multiple competencies through one project.

A Small School Setting

Our small size allows us to approach learning in non-traditional ways, and gives us the ability to extend our learning beyond the classroom walls and into our community. It allows us to utilize a variety of learning and teaching methods and techniques. This environment provides the opportunity for young people to share their thoughts and knowledge in meaningful ways, and to give them the confidence to become active participants in our school community.

Experiential & Engaging Learning Experiences

We believe offering learning experiences that extend beyond the classroom provides a unique contribution to young people's lives, helping them to develop their sense of place and to become aware of resources, needs, and challenges in their community. As students learn through experiences that are close to them both physically and emotionally, learning becomes authentic and meaningful. Students learn best when they are able to "do"; rather than just see or hear. This hands-on learning helps students develop creativity, resourcefulness, and critical thinking skills—and it's fun and interesting, creating a community of students who *want* to learn.

Tolerance & Racial Diversity

Northern New Hampshire is a region with limited racial and ethnic diversity, which presents challenges when educating students about the beauty of diversity and providing authentic, first hand cultural experiences. Due to the homogenous population of our area, educators will need to think outside the box, using available resources such as books, technology, visiting presenters and performers, etc. to introduce varied cultures, languages, and experiences, and to prepare our students to be active participants in confronting racial and ethnic injustices. Educators may incorporate service projects and explorations outside our immediate region to gain exposure and experience. Although scarce, our region is home to some non-US natives who have become active visible participants in our community. They willingly share their languages, food, cultural practices, artifacts, and experiences, and could be a valuable resource for Heartwood Public Charter School in providing our students with exposure to varied cultures. We will also collaborate with local organizations that bring international performers and artists to the region throughout the year. When direct experiences and presentations are not possible, videos of varied cultural practices can be accessed, and web-based resources such as teachingtolerance.org can be used to help to educate our students about diversity and social justice, and to create an inclusive school community.

Peace Curriculum

"Peace Education" is teaching, modeling, and encouraging respect and support of one's self, others, and the community as a whole.

At Heartwood Public Charter School, we provide lessons and model the skills that are appropriate for developing "peace" for this age group. We will use the classic "Peace Table" for individual situations, and also give group and individual lessons using materials. Peace curriculum skills that we work on at Heartwood Public Charter School include:

- identifying and naming feelings in yourself and others
- respecting of self and others
- reflective listening and conflict resolution
- self-calming (anger management)
- grace and courtesy
- interconnectedness of all things
- environmental stewardship
- recognizing that all people are equal
- valuing both similarities and differences between ourselves and others
- offering friendship and compassion to all

(g) Academic & Other Learning Goals & Objectives

Although our academics are separated by discipline below, we envision our students' academic experience to be interwoven and interdisciplinary by nature. The following is a broad description, by subject, of our goals and approach to our K-8 grade curriculum. Please note that a more complete curriculum will be established during our planning period as we assemble our team and work with Place-Based education consultants and other advisors experienced with charter school development. This process will serve as a team building opportunity for our teachers and supporting staff, encouraging collaboration and contributions with the development of our curriculum. If at any point we do not have teachers who are able to teach subjects like foreign languages, technology, etc, we plan to recruit suitably qualified people from our community and use technology to support and/or teach. We explored and continue to look into resources such as the online Khan Academy, The Great Courses, mobile STEM labs, and collaborations with other organizations, including our local high schools and colleges. We will also include a plan that addresses blending the New Hampshire State Standards into our Place-Based Curriculum.

Social/Emotional Learning

Outcomes:

- Students will become self-aware and able to examine other's perspectives.
- Students will treat everyone with respect and advocate for the respectful treatment of all.
- Students will recognize, appreciate, and advocate for individualism.
- Students will recognize mistakes as opportunities to learn and improve.
- Students will see challenges as positive experiences that offer opportunities for growth.
- Students will collaborate effectively with others.
- Students will value the contributions of all and offer equal kindness and consideration to each other.
- Students will positively contribute to both the school and greater community.
- Students will take responsibility for mistakes, reconcile errors, resolve problems by finding and implementing solutions, and make restitutions as appropriate.

Curriculum: School values will be actualized in the daily actions and interactions of educators, administrators, and students. Targeted concept and skill development lessons will be integrated into the daily curriculum. Using the principles of Place-Based education, students will be given daily opportunities to work with their peers to solve complex problems by sharing ideas, formulating a plan for success, delegating the responsibility of implementation, supporting each other to identify snags, adjusting the plan when necessary to develop a solution, and celebrating the achievement together.

Language Arts

Outcomes:

- Students will read with enjoyment at a developmentally appropriate level with fluency, accuracy, and comprehension.
- Students will write effectively and creatively for a variety of purposes and audiences.
- Students will practice storytelling and oral presentation to develop purposeful and articulate communication skills.
- Students will work together on projects that promote cooperation, problem solving, collaboration, and supporting each other.

Curriculum: Rich reading materials combined with language arts manipulatives provide opportunities for our students to acquire both encoding and decoding skills. Phonics, grammar, punctuation, word study, etymology, reference/research skills, and daily writing will be introduced as spelling skills develop. Students will obtain a robust vocabulary and sophisticated oral and written skills. Students will learn to be reflective about what they read and write and to make connections between literary themes, genres, and the world around them.

Mathematics

Outcomes:

Students will demonstrate a developmentally appropriate and applicable understanding of the key concepts and principles of mathematics, as defined by New Hampshire state competencies:

- Foundations of Math – Symbolic Expression
- Numbers and Number Systems
- Reasoning and Computational Strategies
- Metacognitive Skills and Communication
- Measurement
- Algebraic Functions, Patterns, and Relations
- Geometry
- Data Analysis, Probability, and Statistics

Curriculum:

At the onset of our school, we plan to utilize an established and well regarded mathematics curriculum program to teach our students math. As our program becomes more developed, we plan to transition to a curriculum which helps our students learn mathematics in an immersive

way—utilizing interdisciplinary and experiential learning in conjunction with our place and nature based methods. The mathematics students learn will be in natural and real-world contexts, and will grow in complexity as their understanding of the world grows. Students will work together to apply math solutions to real world problems, which will lead quite naturally to recording data, making predictions and giving supporting data (their reasoning) for their predictions, graphing data, etc. As the students grow and their projects become more complex, their mathematical knowledge and problem solving abilities will become more complex as well. We believe that this will create students who truly comprehend math concepts, and who are confident problem solvers with a love for learning.

History

Outcomes:

- Students will achieve a developmentally appropriate comprehension of time and its passage.
- Students will gain developmentally appropriate core understanding of the relationships between time, people, and history
- Students will demonstrate an understanding of the major ideas, issues, and events pertaining to the history of governance in our state and nation.
- Students will demonstrate an understanding of the events, actions, and policies of our nation in relation to other peoples and governments over time.
- Students will demonstrate an understanding of the nature of governments, and the fundamental ideals of government of the United States.
- Students will understand basic economic concepts.
- Students will demonstrate a thorough knowledge of the geography of New Hampshire, the United States, and the world, and understand the impact of geography on political, economic, and social developments.
- Students will have a developmentally appropriate understanding of, and appreciation for, diversity and its role in social development, locally and globally.
- Students will gain a subjective understanding about both historical and current events, and will explore histories through the lens of multiple perspectives.

Curriculum: After exploring their own personal history, our students will begin to explore the history, government, economy, and geography of our community and our local region. As they grow, their circle of learning will expand outward; learning about these concepts in the contexts of our state, region, country, continent, and world. Our history curriculum will be introduced to our students through multiple perspectives with an authentic approach that is developmentally appropriate. Our students will explore history and current events from a variety of sources and will be provided with a multitude of opportunities to learn about history through the Place-based model. Through independent and collaborative learning our students will discover the role of history in the development of culture, and will realize the impact of their personal history on their own development and civilization as a whole.

Geography & Culture

Outcomes:

Students will demonstrate a developmentally appropriate and applicable understanding of the key concepts and principles of geography and culture, as defined by New Hampshire state standards:

- Students will gain exposure to world culture and languages.
- Students will demonstrate the ability to use maps, mental maps, globes, and other graphic tools and technologies to acquire, process, report, and analyze geographic information.
- Students will demonstrate an understanding of the physical and human geographic features that define places and regions as well as how culture and experience influence people's perceptions of places and regions.
- Students will demonstrate an understanding of the physical processes that shape the patterns of Earth's surface and the characteristics and spatial distribution of ecosystems.
- Students will demonstrate an understanding of human migration; the complexity of cultural mosaics; economic interdependence; human settlement patterns; and the forces of cooperation and conflict among peoples.
- Students will demonstrate an understanding of the connections and consequences of the interactions between Earth's physical and human systems.

Curriculum: Through the study of the earth's features, maps, and landforms, students will explore the connections and relationships between physical boundaries and the development of cultures, countries, governments, capitals, languages, and economics. Through the examination of the shape, climate, biome and resources of the land, students come to appreciate that where one lives, determines how one lives.

Science

Outcomes:

Students will demonstrate a developmentally appropriate and applicable understanding of the key concepts and principles of science, as defined by New Hampshire state competencies:

- Nature of Science and Engineering
- Patterns
- Cause & Effect
- Scale, Proportion, and Quantity
- Systems and System Models
- Energy and Matter in Systems
- Structure and Function
- Stability and Change of Systems
- Life and Life cycles

Curriculum: Our science curriculum will fully integrate hands-on learning and will focus on process and technique of discovery as students are exposed to the sciences in an immersive

way. We will utilize interdisciplinary and experiential learning methods in conjunction with our place and nature based approaches. As our students' understanding of the world around them deepens, their understanding of science will grow in complexity. Students will participate in developmentally appropriate group activities and individual lessons in various scientific disciplines, including earth science, biology, chemistry, and physics.; and They will employ the Scientific Method as they move through these lessons and into more advanced areas of study. Through observation and investigations in real-world contexts, our students will develop a sense of wonder and excitement about science and the world around them.

Practical Life

Outcomes:

- Students will care daily for their school environment.
- Students and teachers will work together to establish environmentally conscious practices within the school setting.
- Students will learn to prepare healthy meals, working cooperatively with each other.
- Students will learn how to use basic tools and survival skills.
- Students will learn the importance of self-care and how this impacts the world around them.
- Students will work together to create a caring community by developing and demonstrating kindness and respect for all members of the community.

Curriculum: Skills focusing on care of self, each other, family, and the natural world are taught, with the goal that students become fully capable and responsible adults. Our youngest students will develop fine and gross motor skills, learning to dress, pour, sort, wash and dry dishes, and prepare simple foods, among other basic activities. As they mature, our students will also aid in cleaning and taking care of the school both inside and out, with an emphasis on being stewards of their community and their surroundings. Developing environmentally conscious practices within the school setting fosters a lifelong understanding of how to take care of and minimize one's negative impact on the natural world. Practical Life activities encourage independence, responsibility, self-discipline, self reliance, and gender equality. These activities also contribute to the development of concentration and cooperation, expand students' social and emotional education and growth, and help students to develop and practice responsible social skills. By establishing a school-wide atmosphere of care, kindness, and respect, our students will work together with teachers and families to create a safe and secure learning environment where similarities and differences can be recognized and valued, and diversity celebrated.

Civics & Service

Outcomes:

- Students will demonstrate an understanding of the rights and responsibilities of citizenship, and the ability to apply their knowledge of local, state, and national government through the political process and citizen involvement.
- Students will learn to practice core values of kindness and consideration in the classroom, community, and home.

- Students will understand and appreciate diversity of all kinds and its impact on our school and our local and global communities.
- Students will understand, appreciate, and participate in community service.
- Students will participate in community service projects that reinforce the importance of caring deeply for our environment and having compassion for others.

Curriculum: Service, kindness, and responsibility for others will play an important role at Heartwood Public Charter School. Our students will have many opportunities to volunteer both within the school and our local community, and will be supported and encouraged as they choose where they want to focus their service efforts. As they mature, our students will integrate concepts of citizenship and service learning throughout their entire curriculum. They will be exposed to the workings of local government and what it means to be an active citizen in this democratic process. These experiences will then be explored and discussed further in the classroom in order to help our students to develop a sense of empathy, to appreciate all members of a society, and to understand the importance of involvement in one's community.

Technology

Outcomes:

- Students will learn basic computer skills at a developmentally appropriate level.
- Students will understand how to use the internet as a tool for research and information collection, collaboration, and communication (when developmentally appropriate and necessary).
- Students will learn how to balance their use of technology with real world interaction.
- Students will learn how to balance research conducted on the internet with material gathered from other sources (fieldwork, interviews, books, etc).
- Students will learn the history and impact of technology on culture, the environment, society, etc.
- Students will learn how to manage, store, and present information with the use of the internet, spreadsheets, graphs, presentation software, word processing, etc.
- Students will be guided through the use of safe social media and internet practices, and will learn how to become safe and responsible digital citizens.

Curriculum: Our technology curriculum and the use of technology at Heartwood Public Charter School will be framed in a way that supports our beliefs on the subject. While we recognize that technology is an essential life-skill for being an active citizen today, we also believe that technology is simply a tool, and we plan to structure its use in a balanced and intentional way. While our younger students will not be exposed to much in the way of digital technologies, as our students mature, they will learn how to integrate technology into their studies. Along with learning methods to use technology for collaboration, communication, eLearning, data storage and presentation, research, art/design, etc; our students will also learn how to be responsible and safe digital citizens. The use of digital technologies will be focused and limited, and will be used as tools to aid our students' educational needs and development.

Visual & Performing Arts

Outcomes:

- Students will delve into the creative process using a variety of outlets, methods and materials.
- Students will practice creative expression and making meaning through their art (visual and performing).
- Students will explore art theories (ie. music theory, the elements of visual art, and the principles of design).
- Students will be exposed to a variety of artworks, performances, and artists (ie. visual artists, choreographers, dancers, playwrights, actors, storytellers, puppeteers) in a variety of cultures, time periods, and movements.
- Students will be given opportunities to exhibit their artwork and participate in performances.
- Students will learn to analyze, interpret, and evaluate artworks and performances.

Curriculum: Using individual activities and collaborative projects, students will have opportunities to create and express themselves through the arts. Projects and study in all academic areas will incorporate artistic expression and creativity.

Physical Education & Health

Outcomes:

- Students will participate in a physical education program focused on building physical strength, coordination, flexibility, and endurance.
- Students will study human body systems and functions and the requirements for promoting good health.
- Students will learn about human development in a developmentally appropriate approach, promoting a healthy sense of self.
- Students will learn to participate as a member of a team through cooperative games and team sports.
- Students will learn about maintaining their emotional well being and mental health.

Curriculum: To develop a well-rounded physical education experience for our students, we will utilize local resources and national programming. Our students will glean the value of teamwork and team building skills through cooperative games and team sports. The Health curriculum will explore the function of body systems, such as skeletal, circulatory, digestive, reproductive, etc. and basic healthy practices, like proper nutrition, regular exercise, and adequate rest and renewal practices. Our human development curriculum will promote balanced healthy lifestyles and relationships, and will provide students with developmentally appropriate opportunities to learn about and discuss peer pressure, drugs, alcohol, sexuality, and adolescent development.

(h) Achievements & Assessments

The purpose of assessment is to recognize where one has made improvements, areas that continue to be in progress, skills that are mastered, and challenges one faces. Assessment is an ongoing, collaborative process between students, educators, and peers. At Heartwood Public Charter School we believe that every child has an innate desire to learn, and that students are most successful when they are active participants with their own educational experience. This student engagement and involvement in assessment is crucial to (1) taking responsibility and having ownership over one's progress, (2) developing an understanding of oneself, (3) determining areas in need of work, (4) setting goals for improvement, (5) taking the steps to meet those goals, (6) mastery of a skill or competency, and (7) receiving and giving helpful feedback. Giving students responsibility in their own learning, with support and guidance, creates a deeper engagement with a topic or skill, and therefore a more thorough understanding, mastery, and retention.

"Practiced at its best, assessment invites students into the learning process: How are we doing? Where can we go from here? We can easily explain progress or lack of it to students and parents when we can point to standards we and the students agreed to target, and show concrete examples of what achievement looks like." (Brooks, 2005)

Students and educators will use rubrics as guides for all areas of academic learning, physical skills (as applicable), and social & emotional skill building. Rubrics will be designed to focus on levels of desired outcomes, and will include space for dates and discussion notes to demonstrate progress over time. The rubrics will be used to set benchmarks and goals, and strategies to meet the goals, which will be part of each student's Individual Learning Plan & Portfolio. Assessment occurs daily as the student identifies and accomplishes their Individual Daily Work Plan based on their rubrics and Individual Learning Plans.

Our students' direct involvement in the development of their own Individual Learning Plans and Individual Daily Work Plans will result in successful, empowered, and confident students. Individual Learning Plans will be written and maintained in a way which documents and demonstrates progress in each area the student and the educator have identified. Individual Daily Work Plans and other forms of documentation, which may include written work, audio and/or visual recordings, written or recorded educator observations, photographs, projects, presentations, self-assessments, etc. will make up a student's portfolio, which will demonstrate progress and achievements. At least two forms of documentation will be included in the portfolio to demonstrate the mastery of each competency, meeting both the goals of the Individual Learning Plans and those required by the State of NH.

Self-Directed Learning using Individual Daily Work Plans

Progress is made through goal setting and attainment. An aspect of this is the development and implementation of an Individual Daily Work Plan (IDWP). Students will make and follow IDWP's that address study in all academic areas, in accordance with their Individual Learning Plans (to include: Mathematics, Science, and English Language Arts, Reading, Writing, Spelling, History, Geography & Culture, World Languages, Civics & Service, Technology, Visual & Performing Arts, and Physical Education & Health). Individual Daily Work Plans will be based on each child's

individual needs, development, skill level, and interests (as applicable & appropriate). Educators will assist students in creating and adhering to their IDWP's.

At the beginning of each day, every student will review the daily schedule, which will reflect times, locations, students involved, and activities (including field trips, community service projects, visitors, scheduled academic topics, physical activity, outdoor exploration, meals, cleaning, etc.). This may be done in a whole school meeting, a classroom meeting, small groups, one-on-one, or independently. Knowing the daily schedule is necessary when developing Individual Daily Work Plans, so students and educators are able to determine what students will include in their plans and when to implement them. Students will consider how their individual studies will address Personal & Social growth and each academic area; Math, English Language Arts, Science, Social Studies, Art, Foreign Language, Physical Education, and Health.

Students in the lower grades will be learning how to make their Individual Daily Work Plans and will be closely guided by an educator to determine what activities to include and how to schedule them into their day. Educators will monitor and check in with students, ensuring they (1) develop skills to adhere to the plan, (2) stay on task, (3) evaluate the plan, (4) document their achievements, and (5) determine any needed changes. As students gain proficiency with selecting work, writing plans, setting a schedule, and accomplishing their plans, independence will develop and the educator's role will change with the student's.

At the end of each day students will reflect on their learning. This may be done individually, one-on-one with a peer or educator, or in a group, and might be in the form of a written reflection, a conversation, an activity, or contemplation. Reflection improves retention and preserves interest. Students may use this reflection to begin planning for the following day and to spark other's interest as well.

Our Individual Daily Work Plans and Individualized Learning Plans will guide our informal student assessments, and we will also utilize additional means of formal and informal assessment. This will include objective and age-appropriate measures of literacy and numeracy skills—including spelling, reading, expository writing, history, geography, science and mathematics—to satisfy both national and state requirements, and to quantitatively measure each child's progress. We will comply with 194-B:8, V, "At least annually, and near the end of each school year, a chartered public school shall evaluate the educational progress of each pupil, as specified in RSA 194-B:3 II(h). Such evaluation shall include, but not be limited, to the New Hampshire statewide education improvement and assessment program, as provided in RSA 193-C. The cost of the state assessment program shall be borne by the state." We are interested in learning more about participating in the New Hampshire Performance Assessment of Competency Education (PACE) accountability system.

Progress Reports based on observation and linked to the Individualized Learning Plan will be analyzed by teachers, students and families. Progress Reports that assess academic progress and personal growth and development will be issued three or four times per year. In addition, Family-School Conferences will be held toward the beginning and end of each academic year

with teachers, students, and families, to establish or review Individualized Learning Plans, goals, and growth.

During the planning period, Heartwood Public Charter School will further develop and evaluate assessment tools and methods, schedules, and practices for our students. Professional development will be provided to prepare teachers and staff with the frameworks for our assessments, Individualized Learning Plans, Individual Daily Work Plans, curriculum, rubrics, and observational record keeping systems.

(i) High School Graduation Requirements

Not applicable

(j) Staffing Overview

To ensure that students at Heartwood Public Charter School are supported in their academic endeavors and personal growth, we will seek highly qualified, nurturing educators and staff who will treat them with dignity and respect. Our educators will serve as leaders, guides, and role models as they assume the responsibility of building cohesive collaborative classroom communities where our children will feel free to challenge themselves and grow as individuals and as part of a group. Our students will feel safe and supported as they are encouraged to learn and develop at their own pace as they work to reach their full potential.

All Heartwood educators will be trained in Place-based education methods and Positive Discipline techniques.

Head of School

Our Head of School will serve as the visionary leader for Heartwood Public Charter School, playing a vital role in our school's climate and culture. They will guide and empower both our teachers and students, within our supportive and encouraging school community.

Responsibilities of the Head of School include, but are not limited to:

- Orchestrate internal and external communications and public relations
- Lead our school's staff and provide opportunities for their professional development
- Manage our school's daily operations
- Oversee and implement the school's disciplinary policies and procedures
- Set the tone for our school's culture, climate, and safety
- Serve as an effective liaison with other educational institutions
- Serve as the Business manager for our school
- Fulfill required duties with state and federal agencies
- Model our values in visible daily actions
- Follow Charter School Law

Head of School Qualifications

- Meet required state and federal background checks
- Meet all NH regulations for eligibility and teacher certification, preferred
- Master's Degree from an accredited university, preferred
- Minimum of 5 years teaching and/or school administration experience, preferred
- 3+ years experience as a Business/Operations Manager, preferred
- Experience with administrative duties, preferred
- Experience with grant writing and management, preferred
- Experience with, or willingness to learn more about, :
 - Place-Based Education
 - Emergent Curriculum
 - Nature-based Curriculum
 - Differentiated Curriculum
 - Alternative educational frameworks in a public school setting
 - Positive discipline and positive behavior supports
- Such other qualifications as the Board of Trustees may find appropriate

Learning Coordinator

The role of the Learning Coordinator is an integral position at Heartwood Public Charter School. Our Learning Coordinator is responsible for overseeing, coordinating, and advocating for Special Education Services, which will be maintained through developing relationships with district service providers. This person will work closely with our teachers and is responsible for overseeing the integration and implementation of our Place-based education curriculum throughout the school. This person will also work one on one with our students and assist them with the development of their Individualized Learning Plans. The Learning Coordinator will work to develop relationships with our families, and will act as a liaison between our students' sending schools and Heartwood Public Charter School.

Learning Coordinator Responsibilities

- Oversee and coordinate Special Education Services
- Work with students and teachers to develop each student's Individualized Learning Plan
- Support accommodations as stated by a student's IEP
- Work with our teachers to develop and implement curriculum
- Play a supporting role to our teachers
- Help to aid new students transitioning into our school, to include creating learning plans
- Collaborate with lower and upper elementary classroom teachers and assistants in facilitation of Individual Education Program requirements
- In conjunction with the teachers, carefully observe and keep records of each student's individual progression through the classroom, always being available to offer gentle guidance toward self directed learning
- Work with teachers to submit progress reports 4x/year

- Works to develop close and effective relationships with parents
- Follows the school's policies and procedures for student evaluation and record keeping, meeting all due dates as required
- Demonstrate a strong commitment to professional ethics.
- Demonstrate an understanding of, and commitment to, Place-based education
- Model our values in visible daily actions
- Demonstrate commitment to competent communications and conflict resolution efforts across the school community
- Protect the privacy and confidentiality of each student

Learning Coordinator Qualifications

- Meet required state and federal background checks
- Ability to oversee curriculum development and implementation
- Special Education certification, preferred
- Special Education experience required
- Ability to implement educational best practices in conjunction with Place-based education curriculum and NH State Standards
- Ability to keep progress records on students
- Team-oriented with a collaborative approach to working with colleagues, Head of School, and families
- Strong written and verbal communication skills
- Understanding of, and appreciation for, diversity including students with learning disabilities and those from diverse families and socio-economic situations
- An open mind and sense of humor
- Experience with, or willingness to learn more about:
 - Place-Based Education
 - Emergent Curriculum
 - Nature-based Curriculum
 - Differentiated Curriculum
 - Alternative educational frameworks in a public school setting
 - Positive discipline and positive behavior supports

Teachers

Our classrooms will be run by one (1) Lead Teacher and supported by one (1) Assistant Teacher in the lower grades. The upper grades will have one (1) Lead Teacher, and will share two (2) Assistant Teachers. Our Lead Teachers will preferably hold, at minimum, a 4-year Bachelor degree or equivalent experience. As per New Hampshire's charter school statute, RSA 194-B:14. IV, a minimum of 50% of our Lead Teachers will hold New Hampshire teaching certificates or have at least three years of teaching experience. They must understand and believe in Place-Based philosophies and be familiar with individualized observation and record keeping. They also must be able to adapt Place-Based methods and curriculum to the New Hampshire

State Standards and vice versa. Heartwood Public Charter School teachers will be nurturing, reflective, and creative problem solvers who are committed to the school's Mission.

Teacher Responsibilities

- Nurture relationships with each student and family
- Monitor and guide students in goal setting, learning, organization, implementation, etc.
- Work with the Learning Coordinator to develop curriculum
- Facilitate learning
- Maintain a safe, respectful, positive learning environment
- Partner with colleagues, administration, and families to meet the needs of students
- Observe and track student progress, keep records, and work with the learning coordinator to maintain individualized learning plans and to complete progress reports
- Conduct assessments
- Implement Individualized Education Plans
- Hold conferences with families
- Participate in professional development, including training in Place-based education
- Oversee classroom maintenance and hygiene
- Facilitate student discussions regarding guidelines for safety and appropriate behavior within the school environment and out in the community
- Act as a mandated reporter for suspicions of neglect, abuse, etc.
- Positively guide and provide feedback to assistant teacher while providing autonomy
- Model our values in visible daily actions
- Fulfill any other responsibilities deemed relevant and necessary to the position

Teacher Qualifications

- Meet required state and federal background checks
- Bachelor's Degree from an accredited university, preferred
- NH teaching license or certification, preferred
- 3 years teaching experience, preferred
- Experience with or willingness to learn more about:
 - Place-Based Education
 - Emergent Curriculum
 - Nature-based Curriculum
 - Differentiated Curriculum
 - Alternative educational frameworks in a public school setting
 - Positive discipline and positive behavior supports
- Competence in teaching, classroom management, and all related responsibilities
- Enthusiastic, creative, and loving authority with students
- Ability to work well with colleagues, administration, and families
- Ability to collaborate with local businesses, individuals, and community partners to plan and coordinate activities and learning experiences
- Certification in CPR and First Aid

Assistant Teachers

Our Assistant Teachers must demonstrate their ability to embrace the place-based and nature-based education model and be expected to fully support Heartwood Public Charter School's mission.

Assistant Teacher Responsibilities

- Support the lead teacher and students
- Assist with facilitating learning
- Assist with record keeping and assessments
- Help maintain a safe, organized, clean environment
- Participate in professional development, including training in Place-based education and positive discipline techniques
- Model our values in visible daily actions

Assistant Teacher Qualifications

- Meet required state and federal background checks
- Experience working with children, preferred
- Enthusiastic, creative, and loving authority with students
- Ability to work well with colleagues, administration and families
- Experience with, or willingness to learn more about:
 - Place-Based Education
 - Emergent Curriculum
 - Nature-based Curriculum
 - Differentiated Curriculum
 - Alternative educational frameworks in a public school setting
 - Positive discipline and positive behavior supports
- Desire to further oneself and welcome positive guidance
- Ability to work autonomously under the guidance of the Lead Teacher

(k) Personnel Compensation Plan

Salary

Our School Administrator, Learning Coordinator, and Lead Teachers will be paid a salary. The salaries of these full time personnel shall be paid bi-weekly. Assistant Teachers, other personnel, consultants, or contracted employees, whether full-time or part-time, will be paid on an hourly rate as employees or as independent professionals based on negotiated rates.

Vacation

Heartwood Public Charter School will publish an annual calendar of holidays and vacations during which the School will officially be closed.

Paid Time Off (PTO)

Full-time salaried staff will receive ten (10) PTO days per school year (in addition to scheduled school calendar vacations), to be used in the year in which they are accrued. Part-time salaried employees will receive five (5) PTO days per year. For purposes of PTO for part-time salaried employees, one day will equal the number of hours in that employee's regularly scheduled work day.

Other Benefits

It is the goal of Heartwood Public Charter School to offer healthcare benefits to all of its employees. Such benefits may be offered as a choice system with a specific annual election or as a specific insurance plan provided by the School with an employee contribution. Board of Trustees policy and availability of specific benefit programs will determine the specific benefit type offered. Board of Trustees policy and the requirements of specific benefit programs will determine whether, and to what extent, part-time or non-salaried personnel will be eligible for benefits and at what percent of full-time equivalent allocation.

General Provisions

Heartwood Public Charter School will comply with all federal, state, and local laws and rules related to pre-employment screening, hiring, employment compensation and leave, and reserves the right to amend the above personnel provisions as necessary to comply with applicable laws and rules, and as otherwise necessary.

In accordance with RSA 189:13-a, Heartwood Public Charter School shall conduct school employee background checks on all individuals working within the school.

(I) Pupil Transportation Plan

As mentioned in Section D of this application, the site of Heartwood Public Charter School will be finalized during our initial planning period, giving us a year to do so. We will seek a centrally located site in Lancaster, NH both to accommodate the resources of the White Mountains Regional School District, and for ease of access for families traveling from other areas.

We have met with the White Mountains Regional School District Superintendent of Schools, Dr. Marion Anastasia and have started a dialog regarding the issue of transportation. While our plan is site specific and our exact location is yet to be determined, at this point we hope to work with Lancaster Elementary School (LES) to coordinate bussing between our sites. Ideally, Heartwood Public Charter School students will share a bus with LES students, and we will help coordinate the bussing (if needed) between our schools. We hope this helps save on costs, is convenient for the district and our families, and helps build our relationship with the Lancaster Elementary School/community. We will continue to explore potential transportation methods.

Heartwood Public Charter School will follow the guidelines of 194-B:2,V which states: "Pupils who reside in the school district in which the charter school is located shall be provided

transportation to that school by the district on the same terms and conditions as provided for in RSA 189:6 and RSA 189:8 and that transportation is provided to pupils attending other public schools within that district. For the purposes of open enrollment, neither the sending nor the receiving school district shall be obligated to provide transportation services for pupils attending an open enrollment school outside the pupil's resident district.” It is our expectation that students who attend the Heartwood Public Charter School and reside in the host district shall have the opportunity to ride district transportation.

Students attending the Heartwood Public Charter School who do not reside in the host district will be required to arrange for their own transportation. Given the very limited funding per student, and the lack of guarantee for any additional funding above the state allotment per student, students from outside of the host district must either request their assigned districts to transport them, or arrange for their own transportation. Heartwood Public Charter School will make every effort to support families as they explore transportation options and facilitate ride sharing between families of students from outside the district through an online database or other means. We are committed to working with parents of out of district students, when needed, to help find solutions for transportation.

(m) Statement of Assurances Related to Non-Discrimination

Heartwood Public Charter School will celebrate diversity in all its forms. The School will not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, national or ethnic origin, age, gender, gender identity, sex, sexual orientation, disability, socio-economic, marital or veteran status, citizenship, or genetic information in the selection of students or staff or in the administration of the School or in any other way that is prohibited by law. The Board of Trustees will develop and adopt a policy of open acceptance and will create administrative procedures to address any discriminatory concerns.

(n) Special Education Coordination Method

Heartwood Public Charter School will comply with all federal and state special education laws and rules applicable to New Hampshire charter schools.

Charter Public Schools & Special Education

As an open enrollment public school, Heartwood Charter School will accept applications from any child who is a New Hampshire resident. In accordance with New Hampshire law (RSA 194-B:8), Heartwood Public Charter School will not discriminate against any child with a disability as defined in RSA 186-C. Under New Hampshire’s charter school statute, RSA 194-B:11, III, when a child with disabilities attends a chartered public school, all current options available to the parent and the school district are retained.

In order to ensure appropriate and adequate services will be provided for the students, the Learning Coordinator will partner with the Special Education Staff at the SAU and participate as

part of the student's IEP team. The Learning Coordinator will make every effort to work with support services personnel such as Physical Therapist, Occupational Therapist, and Speech/Language Therapist. Individual student's teachers, in collaboration with our Learning Coordinator, will be responsible for carrying out the classroom specific IEP goals. The Head of School will provide oversight.

ED 1104.01, effective 6/28/08, sets forth the following sequence of the special education process:

1. Referral;
2. Evaluation;
3. Determination of eligibility;
4. Development and approval of the IEP;
5. Placement;
6. Ongoing monitoring of the IEP; and
7. Annual review of the IEP. 30

It is clear pursuant to RSA 194-B:11, III, that decision-making responsibility for the special education process for children with disabilities attending a public charter school remains with the child's sending school district. In addition, RSA 194-B:11, III provides that the sending school district remains responsible for the funding for children with disabilities attending a chartered public school. These important provisions allow the responsible sending district and Heartwood Public Charter School to cooperate creatively to meet a student's special education needs. The sending district will be required to provide the Heartwood Public Charter School with a complete copy of each student's IEP for implementation and monitoring purposes.

(o) Admission Procedures

We are committed to building a diverse community of learners who embrace our Place-based approach to educate, and recognize the unique journey that this opportunity both provides and requires. Admission to Heartwood Public Charter School shall be open to any student who resides in the State of New Hampshire and to choice Vermont towns/districts as applicable. Methods of admission shall not be designed, intended or used to discriminate or violate individual rights in any manner prohibited by law.

We will educate prospective families on our educational approach by providing literature and opportunities to learn about the school both formally and informally (see Information Dissemination, Section W). We are hopeful that our prospective families will be committed to our educational vision, as the success of our school hinges upon the the support of our community and family involvement.

Admission Procedures

Heartwood Public Charter School will follow the basic method of admissions that defines charter schools nationwide:

- Admission shall be blind.
- Should the number of applicants exceed capacity, students will be chosen by a lottery system, with a wait list developed from the lottery overflow.

At minimum, the admissions process will include the following:

1. Prospective students and their families will tour our school and be invited to attend an informational meeting that outlines and explains our educational approach and our school's expectations.
2. Application packets with information about the school and its philosophy and expectations will be shared, along with student related policies. Interested families will then submit their application.
3. Applications will be reviewed for completeness.
4. Should applicants exceed the number of allotted slots, a blind lottery, organized by grade, will be held. Those not accepted in the lottery will be placed on a waiting list in the order determined by the lottery.
5. All students receive notification. Those who have been placed on a wait list will be notified of such.
6. After the enrollment process is complete, Heartwood Public Charter School will hold meetings for admitted students and their families and provide an orientation for students and families.

The Board of Trustees of Heartwood Public Charter School will establish an Admissions Committee. Heartwood Public Charter School reserves the right to have the Admissions Committee further develop and amend the specific admissions process during the planning year.

Enrollment Provisions

- Heartwood Public Charter School will offer automatic re-enrollment to its students, provided they are in good standing (as decided by a team including the Learning Coordinator, Lead Teacher, and Head of School). Families will have to provide a letter of intent to re-enroll by a stated date preceding the lottery, so there is clarity about available spaces.
- Heartwood Public Charter School will admit from the waitlist should space become available after the lottery.
- Siblings of children already enrolled at Heartwood Public Charter School will receive preference.
- The Board of Trustees will reserve the right to give preference in enrollment to children of School Faculty as part of the employee benefits package.
- Children of the Founders of the Heartwood Public Charter School will receive priority for Placement, with a cap of 10 children, as a means of recognition of their time and contributions in establishing the school.

- Students residing in the state New Hampshire have admission preference. If there are available spaces after the lottery, the board has the option to open enrollment to out-of-state students.

(p) Philosophy of Pupil Governance & Discipline

The primary goal of discipline at Heartwood Public Charter school is the development of self-discipline, which is achieved not through externally administered punishments and rewards, but through an all encompassing, fully integrated social emotional curriculum and the overarching expectations of respect, responsibility, and community. Teachers will be active models of Heartwood's core values of kindness, gratefulness, and respect. The school will be governed through a collaboration between students and educators, using the practices of Positive Discipline as developed by Alfred Adler and more recently advanced by Jane Nelson.

The foundation of self-discipline is the development of positive, trusting relationships with kind, respectful adults. The recognition and appreciation of individual temperaments, personalities, preferences, beliefs, communication styles, learning styles, motivations, strengths and challenges, leadership styles, experiences, skills, and interests will be modeled by educators and administrators, embedded in daily conversations, and explicitly taught with the goal of building students' self-awareness and perspective taking. Heartwood Public Charter School educators and administrators will use their understanding of individuals to focus on determining the motivation behind negative behaviors, identifying lagging skills, implementing positive behavioral supports, and providing targeted social and emotional skill development as needed.

Beginning in kindergarten, students will participate in the governance and management of the classroom and school. Students will be guided by the teacher in how to care for the classroom and materials through modeling and instruction. Students will be given ownership of the classroom environment, with the expectations of individual responsibility, order, and cleanliness, forging student capability and appreciation of their contributions. Teachers and students will work collaboratively to develop reasonable classroom expectations that address physical and emotional safety, and universal respect. Students will contribute to the greater community through positive acts of service, building their sense of self and connection with others.

Daily class meetings, as outlined in *Positive Discipline* by Jane Nelson, will be held, giving students and educators the opportunity to identify, address and resolve challenges, including conflicts, mistakes, struggles, misunderstandings, and intentional harm. Students and educators will work together to problem solve then select and implement strategies to resolve these challenges. (Nelson, 2006)

In multi-grade classrooms, and through daily curriculum implementation, communication and leadership skills will develop as students progress academically and develop socially. Self discipline, self advocacy, governance, communication and conflict resolution will be inherent to the curriculum. Positive Discipline, which employs the use of logical consequences and involves

students in developing a plan of action, will be implemented with the intent of building self aware, self disciplined, responsible citizens.

In accordance with Heartwood Public Charter Schools guiding value of respect for all, every student and adult should feel physically and emotionally safe at school. If problem solving plans developed and implemented through student teacher collaboration have not been effective, team meetings involving families will be held to seek alternative solutions.

Our Learning Coordinator will work to support teachers in addressing behavioral concerns they are experiencing with students in their classrooms that have not been resolved within the class, in a manner that is respectful of the student and their family, and in keeping with our mission. Children with challenging behaviors will be treated with respect and compassion. When challenging behaviors are encountered, educators and administrators will work collaboratively with students and families to provide individualized interventions and positive behavior supports. This includes finding collaborative and proactive solutions for students, as presented by Dr. Ross Greene's Collaborative Problem Solving model (CPS). Collaborative Problem Solving (CPS) may be used to identify lagging skills and unsolved problems, then provide targeted development of these skills after the student works with a supervising adult to develop and implement a realistic and mutually satisfactory plan of action.

<https://www.livesinthebalance.org/about-cps>

A detailed student governance and discipline procedure outline will be established by staff and the Board of Trustees in the planning phase of our charter. Prior to opening, Heartwood Public Charter School will develop policies regarding promoting school safety including: reporting of suspected abuse or neglect; sexual harassment, as detailed in Ed 303.01(j) and (k); RSA 193-F, pupil safety and violence prevention; RSA 126-U, and limiting the use of child restraint practices. Heartwood Public Charter School will also outline requirements for developmentally appropriate daily physical activity pursuant to Ed 310 and our policies on record retention.

(q) Administering Fiscal Accounts & Reporting

Heartwood Public Charter School will follow New Hampshire public school accounting guidelines and will put in place internal accounting controls necessary to safeguard its assets. The School will maintain accurate financial records in accordance with Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP) for non-profit corporations. An annual financial report will be provided with audit by an independent certified public accountant.

The Board of Trustees will appoint a Treasurer to provide the oversight necessary for monitoring the financial status of the School. The Treasurer shall report the financial status of the School to the Board of Trustees at least monthly. The Board of Trustees shall also adopt policies for the financial management of the school, including policies on conflicts of interest for members of the Board of Trustees, Administration, and Faculty. Accounting activities will consist primarily of the biweekly payroll paid to school personnel and the maintenance of an accounts payable system to track amounts due to vendors.

A general account will be set up for the administration of funds, and the Treasurer and named Trustees will have check-writing authority. Two signatures will be required on all checks. Each individual with check-writing authority will be covered by a fidelity bond in accordance with the guidelines of the New Hampshire Department of Revenue Administration.

Except for emergency purchases approved by the School's authorized personnel (up to a maximum amount to be established by the Board of Trustees), all expenditures and contracts will be handled through an encumbrance system of purchase orders for clear tracking of expenditures and status of account balances.

Heartwood Public Charter School will comply with all requirements specified in the law pertaining to reporting requirements (RSA 194-B:10, I-V). This list includes creation of the annual report, annual financial audit produced by an independent certified-accountant, program audit, and participation during the annual school budget process. Heartwood Public Charter School will also comply with all requirements set forth in Ed 318.07 regarding the contents of its annual report including but not limited to:

- A general progress report
- An assessment and report of how the charter school is meeting its educational and financial goals, as identified in its mission statement,
- Changes, if any, in the organizational structure and make-up of the Board of Trustees,
- A report of enrollment statistics including but not limited to, attendance, per-class enrollment, graduation rates, and any occurrences of withdrawal,
- School calendar,
- Transportation services,
- Financial statement and balance sheet identifying the charter school's assets, liabilities, and fund balances or equities,
- Projections of income and expenses for the upcoming school year

The Board of Trustees will select an independent auditor annually to complete the required annual audit and report. The audit will address accounting practices and review the school's internal controls. The audit will be conducted in accordance with applicable generally accepted accounting principles. It is anticipated that the annual audit will be completed within six months of the close of the fiscal year. The Board of Trustees will review and respond to the audit report, if necessary, and include the audit results in its annual report.

(r) Annual Budget, Including All Sources of Funding

Please see the budget that appears in Appendix B.

The included budget reflects estimated expenses for our planning year, and for the subsequent 5 years of operation.

We have developed a list of our most likely and most important mission-driven plans and costs, recognizing that the budget as represented relies on awarded start-up funding. Our budget includes both expected sources of revenue related to the federal start-up grant, and the state per-pupil allotment based on our projected enrollment. We will start work to raise the additional funds necessary to support the budget once the charter has been granted. During our planning period we will also examine the feasibility of additional revenue sources, which we hope will bring income as well as positive exposure to the school.

As mentioned in the introductory section of this application, we have entered into this project with the full understanding that the state per-pupil allotment is rarely enough to support a New Hampshire independent charter school's full goals and mission and guarantee sustainability. We will offset this gap through a variety of means, including grant monies, fundraising, and potential donations. Strategic partnerships and other fundraising efforts will be very important. Rather than seek out a few high dollar investors, we hope to cultivate many committed supporters from our community to help support the mission of Heartwood Public Charter School.

From the outset, Heartwood Public Charter School Founders, Trustees, Staff and families will understand the need to supplement the state-provided funds in order to deliver quality education. Contributions by those who join the School community will take many forms—time in the classroom, assistance in various areas dependent on expertise (computer support, construction, etc.), and some parents may consider financial contributions if they are able. All donations will be tax deductible to the extent permitted by law.

Once Heartwood Public Charter School has been established, the Board of Trustees will organize a fundraising committee. This committee's mission will be to support the school's economic viability. The committee will focus on securing the support of local, state, and national foundations and charitable organizations, as well as cultivating support from community members and businesses. The unique character of the school, the resources and the value it brings to our local community will be highlighted in our fundraising efforts.

(s) School Calendar Arrangement

Heartwood Public Charter School will follow a 180-day school year in accordance with the RSA 194-B:8, III, and expects to follow the calendar of our host district in order to best coordinate transportation services. Any school-specific changes to the schedule will be monitored carefully to ensure that our students meet the required number of attendance hours.

It is expected that days will begin at approximately 8:00am and end at 2:30pm, though some flexibility may be required to meet our host district's bus route schedule. Should transportation issues result in lost educational hours, we will address this loss and amend our students' school hours.

(t) Evidence of Accurate Insurance Coverage

Pursuant to RSA 194-B:1, Heartwood Public Charter School will be a public school afforded the same protections as all other public schools under RSA 507(b), which provides for limited general liability for the charter school and its agents. The Board of Trustees will procure, and provide evidence of, adequate insurance coverage as required by the State, including but not limited to general liability for the School.

(u) Consultants

We are fortunate to have already identified and met with several advisors, consultants, business owners, and local citizens who will help us to achieve our goals. These professionals have rich experience, are excited about our school and ideas, and are willing to share their wisdom and experience as we work to develop our school program. While place-based learning methods are not a new concept, exciting curriculum and programs in the field are currently emerging. We look forward to consulting and collaborating with many of the field's experts, as well as members of our community who will help to make our Place-based dreams a reality.

Sarah Anderson is the Field Coordinator at The Cottonwood School of Civics and Science, in Portland, OR. Sarah Anderson, was previously a 7th/8th teacher specializing in language arts and social studies, was originally lured to Oregon by its waterfalls. She spent most of her childhood exploring rivers and forests near her rural Vermont home- experiences which provided inspiration for a passion for nature and all things wild. After graduating with a degree in American Studies from Bard College in New York, Sarah served as an AmeriCorps volunteer for Metro Parks and Greenspaces in Portland. Since then, she has worked as a crew leader at an educational farm in Vermont, a Teacher Naturalist in the California Redwoods and a Middle School Humanities teacher at The Key School in Annapolis, Maryland. Sarah received a Masters of Education from Antioch New England Graduate School, where she specialized in integrated and place-based education. In addition to exploring the local neighborhoods and environs with her zany middle schoolers, Sarah enjoys knitting, hiking, pickling, reading good books, and climbing waterfalls.

Melissa Grella, PhD is the founder and executive director of Taproot Farm & Environmental Education Center. Melissa's life passion is connecting people to nature, sparked from her very first job as an intern with California Audubon. Melissa grew up in Jefferson and immediately left upon graduation to explore, grow, and learn. She returned to the north country on her last semester of graduate school with the Audubon Expedition Institute, a traveling program that changed her life and outlook on how we learn and educate. It was at that time that she completed her thesis, which explored the level of environmental education in 14 middle schools in Coos County. The idea for Taproot came as a result of her research.

Since that time, she has held a variety of positions that include trip leader, naturalist, and environmental educator at various nonprofits, classroom teacher at a public alternative high school program, director of a cross country ski center, director of a town recreation department, nature center director, college adjunct professor, and a founding faculty member and administrator at a private Waldorf school. Melissa's philosophy of education emphasizes developmentally appropriate learning that is holistic, phenomenological, ecological, grounded in place, experiential, and nurtures aesthetic experiences. In the words of David Orr, she believes that "all education is environmental education".

Melissa received her BS in Natural Resources from the University of Maine, an MA in Environmental Education from Lesley University's Audubon Expedition Institute program, and a PhD in Environmental Studies from Antioch University New England with her dissertation titled *Nurturing the Aesthetic: Learning to care for the environment in a Waldorf School*.

When not working on Taproot, Melissa enjoys spending time nordic skiing, gardening, camping, hiking, backpacking, long-distance swimming, biking, paddling, playing the guitar, and reading. She resides in Lancaster with her beloved husband, Kyle, and their velvety, silver cat, Grigio.

David Sobel, MEd received a BA from Williams College and an MEd from Antioch University in New England. He was co-founder of the Harrisville Children's Center in Harrisville, New Hampshire, and has served as a publicly elected school board member in both Nelson and Harrisville, New Hampshire. He has served as a staff development and science curriculum consultant to schools in New Hampshire and Vermont and has been a guest speaker and workshop leader for a variety of school and environmental organizations. He serves on the editorial board of the *Holistic Education Review* and is the author of several books and articles on developmental psychology, place-based education and ecoliteracy.

Anne Stires, brings her academic training together with her love of life and the natural world at the school she founded, the Juniper Hill School, in Alna, Maine. There, along with like-minded colleagues, she shares her enthusiasm for learning through the lens of place. The Juniper Hill School's "place" is her grandmother's 1761 farm in Alna bordering the Sheepscot River. This farm has served as a consistent refuge and "garden of adventure" throughout Anne's life. Now, it is where her students begin their immersion in the adventure of learning by studying the natural and human environments around them.

Anne has a bachelor's degree in Biology and English from Hamilton College in New York and a master's degree in Education from Antioch University New England. An affinity for nature and environmental education always brought her back to Maine. While pursuing her education, she worked at local marine and environmental stewardship programs: the Darling Marine Center, Chewonki Foundation and Tanglewood Learning Center. Anne also directed a Place-Based Education program for 25 schools on the midcoast region of Maine for the Quebec-Laborador Foundation Marine Program. As a classroom teacher, she taught at Sheepscot Valley Children's House in Wiscasset and Boothbay Region Elementary School before starting her ideal, hands-on learning "place": Juniper Hill. Anne is a prolific speaker and advocate on the topic of

nature-based education. Most recently, Anne wrote a chapter of the new book Redleaf Press on the topic: "[Nature Preschools and Forest Kindergartens: The Handbook for Outdoor Learning](#)" by David Sobel (with Patti Ensel Bailie, Ken Finch, Erin K. Kenny, and Anne Stires). Juniper Hill School is also featured throughout the book. In addition to being the school founder and director, Anne teaches the Roots class, as well as graduate level courses at Antioch University.

(v) Philosophy of Parent Involvement

We believe that family involvement is essential for Heartwood Public Charter School to thrive, and that our students will be most successful when our teachers and families work together. We see parents/guardians as key participants in both building and maintaining our school community. We hope that the ongoing presence of our students' families will be the normative culture at Heartwood Public Charter School.

Heartwood Public Charter School will work to accommodate the different needs and situations of families, and will value and celebrate the variety of ways our families will be able to contribute to the education of their children and to our school. Ideally, parents/guardians will participate in school activities as their schedules allow, and we will strongly encourage them to become involved and volunteer over the course of the school year. These volunteer hours may take many shapes and forms including supporting classroom activities, providing skills or services, organizing or facilitating school events or fundraisers, etc. Parents will also be a valued part of our Board of Trustees (see Governance, Section B) and our fundraising committee, and we consider them to be irreplaceable resources with regards to networking within the community for the success of our Place-based approach.

We also recognize the importance of family involvement in a child's education, and hope to provide workshops and informational sessions on topics of value to our families and the community. Additionally, we hope for the establishment of a parent organization to create an opportunity for support, discussions, problem solving and parent education.

Parents/guardians of students of Heartwood Public Charter School will receive regular reports on their children's academic and emotional growth (see Assessment, Section H). By design parents/guardians become involved and engaged in their children's life at school and their overall education. We will strive to ensure that both parents and their children are empowered to become advocates for their educational experience, and we will always encourage respectful and thoughtful two-way communication. We will offer a variety of means for this communication to take place (e.g. written feedback, surveys, and meetings).

Heartwood Public Charter School will be committed to the education and betterment of everyone in both our school and broader communities. We will seek to bring a variety of educational opportunities to the school, and aim to shape the school as a place where people from within and beyond the school community come together to engage, experience, and grow. Professional and family education will deepen the understanding of Place-Based

philosophy, highlight issues faced by our students (e.g., the role of technology, issues of respect of others and self), and will promote our involvement with and growth of our community.

(w) Information Dissemination

Heartwood Public Charter School will employ many forms of outreach to attract and inform potential students and their families of the opportunity the school will provide. Because we will be the first elementary public charter school in the region, and the only Place-Based school in Northern New Hampshire, we will need to educate our community and potential families about not only Place-Based education and our school, but also public charter schools in general. It is extremely important to us that all members of our community are informed about Heartwood Public Charter School, and that the school is accessible to all people. Work in this area will begin as soon as the charter has been granted.

Utilizing literature, informational gatherings, social media, and other marketing platforms, we will introduce the Place-Based method and the Heartwood Public Charter School approach, mission, and goals. Working with community members, we will develop outreach materials and approaches appropriate for various audiences. We plan to advertise at a range of community locations, including doctor's offices, the library, our local food pantry, preschools, with social service locations, etc. Once the School is in operation, we will offer tours and observation opportunities as well.

We will also create an informative website, among other online tools, to help students and their families learn about and assess the school and make an informed decision before submitting their application materials.

The Board of Trustees will form an enrollment committee and will partner with local service organizations to build our student body. Heartwood Public Charter School will establish relationships with members of the local School District as well as other districts, and with potential feeder schools (including but not limited to private pre-k/kindergarten programs in the state). We will do everything we can to recruit students without bias.

Once approved, Heartwood Public Charter School will hold community outreach events in Lancaster, NH and the surrounding communities. At these events we will be introducing families to the charter school model as well as the innovative approach that we will offer.

(x) A Global Hold-Harmless Clause

In accordance with RSA 194-B: 3, II(x), Heartwood Public Charter School, its successors and assigns, covenants and agrees at all times to indemnify and hold harmless any school district which sends its students to the charter school, and their school boards, officers, Trustees, agents, employees, all funding districts and sources, and their successors and assigns, (the "Indemnified Parties") from any and all claims, demands actions and causes of action, whether

in law or in equity, and all damages, costs, losses, and expenses, including but not limited to reasonable attorneys' fees and legal costs, for any action or inaction of the charter school, its Board of Trustees, Head of Schools, officers, employees, agents, representatives, contractors, guests and invitees, or pupils. The School shall have no obligation to hold harmless the Indemnified Parties for any claims, damages, losses, or expenses resulting from the Indemnified Parties' own acts or omissions.

(y) Severability Provisions & Statement of Assurance

If any part of the charter contract is determined to be invalid or illegal by a court of competent jurisdiction, such invalidation or illegality shall not affect the remaining portions of the charter contract, which shall remain in full force and effect. Any provision of the charter school contract found by competent authority to be contrary to applicable law, rule, or regulation shall not be enforceable.

(z) Provision for Dissolution of the Charter

If Heartwood Public Charter School ceases operation, the Board of Trustees shall consult with an attorney and the Department of Education to assure that contractual and financial obligations are met. Upon the dissolution of the School, the assets remaining after the payment of all its liabilities, and the return of any loaned items to rightful owners, shall be distributed to such organization or organizations operated exclusively for charitable or educational purposes that qualify as an exempt organization within the meaning of 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue code of 1986, or any corresponding section of any future federal tax code, or shall be distributed to the federal government, or to state or local government, for a public educational purpose.

(aa) Information Related to Conversion of a Public School

Not Applicable

(bb) Cessation of School

In the event that Heartwood Public Charter School shall have cause to cease operation, the Head of School will work with the Board of Trustees to develop a student transfer process and advise all parents/guardians, Staff and Faculty of the process to be followed. To complete each student's personal file, parents/guardians shall be asked to provide a statement of intent regarding their children's education, moving forward.

Heartwood Public Charter School will obtain parent/guardian permission for release of information in order to notify the new schools of the impending transfers. Heartwood Public Charter School Staff, Faculty and Board of Trustees will make every effort to be available for

consultation, sharing students' portfolios, individualized learning plans and other relevant materials with the receiving school.

Each family will also receive notice by mail, in a timely fashion, advising them of the dissolution of the School and the plan for student transition. Heartwood Public Charter School will also help guide families toward options that may best match their needs and abilities academically, and if appropriate, geographically. And of course the School will ensure that the receiving schools have appropriate information to facilitate the students' transitions.

(cc) Proposed Contracts with Local Schools

Not Applicable

(dd) Proposed Accountability Plan

Heartwood Public Charter School will provide the New Hampshire State Department of Education with reports on our programs and progress annually. Utilizing a variety of assessment tools and data collected from our students, Faculty/Staff and parents/guardians, we will share information about our educational impact, parental involvement, outreach methodology and an overall analysis of our goals. In addition, our annual reports will inform the Department about our student enrollment, financial operations and governance.

This reporting will address the following questions:

1. Is the School making progress toward achieving our Mission?
2. Is the School responsibly using public funds?
3. Is the School promoting student attainment of expected knowledge and skills?
4. Is the School sustainable?

Our accountability plan will be fully developed prior to the date of opening.

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Appendix A: Founding Board of Trustees Biographies

Ann Auger grew up just a few miles outside of Fryeburg, Maine. After graduating from Fryeburg Academy, she attended Plymouth State University, where she graduated Summa Cum Laude with her B.S. in Early Childhood Studies in 2010. During her time at PSU she served as the President of Kappa Delta Pi Honor Society, the Vice President of the Early Childhood Club, and received the award for Most Outstanding Early Childhood Studies Major.

Ann graduated from Champlain College in 2016 with her M.Ed in Early Childhood Education, and Certificate in Administration. She brings a wealth of experience and knowledge from both the public and private sectors of education. Ann has taught public school kindergarten, Head Start, as well as, public and private preschool. Most recently, she was the Executive Director and Lead Preschool Teacher at a small Non-Profit Preschool in Bartlett, NH.

Ann has lived in the North Country for the last 12 years. Currently she resides in Berlin, NH with her husband and daughter. She enjoys hiking, cross-country skiing, camping, reading by the woodstove, and spending time with her family.

In 2016 she began her own business, ECE Visions, and works as an Early Childhood Consultant. Ann holds several contracts in the North Country, most notably as the Early Childhood Initiative Coordinator for the Coös County Director Network, and as the North Country Coach for the State Early Learning Alliance of New Hampshire. She is passionate about her work and is committed to increasing the quality of early care and education across Coös County.

Bethany Bond is a mother, educator, farmer, and artist living in the Northeast Kingdom of Vermont. She earned a BA in Studio Art & Anthropology from the University of Vermont in 2002, and an MFA in Photography at the Savannah College of Art & Design in 2005, graduating Summa Cum Laude.

After grad school, she lived in the Burlington, VT area, working as a graphic, web, and exhibit designer. She was then offered a teaching position at a small university in the northern VT mountains, and was able to return to her roots living in the country. She currently teaches both analogue and digital photography, digital media, and web design at Johnson State College, and has taught at the Community College of Vermont for the past 9 years. She also teaches online at Southern New Hampshire University, and was invited to design curriculum with SNHU for their emerging Photography program in 2016.

Beyond her role as an educator, Bethany has been working with plants and farming for the last ten years. She has raised dairy goats, chickens, and honeybees, and for three growing seasons was an owner/farmer at Blooming Field Farm in the North Country. This small, diverse, vegetable farm's mission was to provide healthy and affordable food for the local community. In this role she managed a Community Supported Agriculture program and contributed food and time to The Lunchbox, a Green Mountain Farm to Table market program which provides free healthy meals for local children. She also manages the farm office at Zack Woods Herb

Farm and is the Sales Coordinator of the Vermont Herb Growers Cooperative, a farming coop founded to provide a single, reliable source of high-quality, organically certified herbs from small-scale diversified farms in Vermont.

Bethany also uses her digital and artistic skills to create affordable websites, photography, and marketing materials for farmers and herbalists, and her work has been published in newspapers, magazines, and books. She loves both working with the land and using technology to create efficient systems and beautiful designs, and has found that working with both students and farmers for the past decade has taught her much about working with the earth and people. This, along with being a parent, has nurtured her already strong tendency toward idealism, and has fueled her passion to be a good steward of the earth and to contribute towards positive and sustainable growth and change.

Bridget Grandmison Freudenberger is a native of Colebrook, NH. After receiving her undergraduate degree in Marketing Management from Bob Jones University in Greenville, South Carolina she returned to her hometown in northern New Hampshire. Bridget earned her MBA from Plymouth University in 2004, and has enjoyed a 24-year career in banking with Bangor Savings Bank, formerly First Colebrook Bank and Granite Bank. As a commercial relationship manager, Bridget has experience working with a variety of businesses in differing industries, providing financing solutions and a comprehensive banking relationship. Bridget has served on a number of non-profit boards over the course of her career, and is now focused on promoting human-powered recreation opportunities in northern Coos County. Bridget is the race director for the multi-sport endurance adventure race, Metallak Race, and works collaboratively with a variety of initiatives centered on outdoor recreation, including state-wide focus group for outdoor economy. Bridget and her husband Phil Freudenberger reside in Colebrook.

Lyn Schmucker decided in the second grade that she wanted to be a teacher, when she became a student of Mrs. Alice Wilkinson—a teacher that recognized, encouraged and valued her skills and talents. She began working with children as a caregiver at the age of 12 and never stopped. After earning her BS in Early Childhood Special Education from the University of Maine at Farmington, while working part time in a child care program and fulfilling several internships, her work with children continued. She was sequentially employed as a nanny, substitute teacher, and paraeducator before moving to the Boston area where she took a position as a preschool teacher and day care coordinator, and was later promoted to Assistant Director.

While in Boston, Lyn began a Master's Degree in Early Childhood Development and Education at Wheelock College, which she completed less than a month before the birth of her first child. As part of her degree she worked as an intern in a K/1 classroom in Hanover, NH, under the guidance of the skilled Chantel Orlen. After six years at home with her children, she formally returned to early education as the Director and lead teacher of Sunnybrook Montessori School in Lancaster, NH, where she attended preschool herself, and continues to learn from and love her work with young children and their families.

Upon returning to her childhood home in Maidstone, VT to raise her family, Lyn dreamed of starting a charter school that would incorporate nature, freedom of choice, a strong social/emotional curriculum, self-reliance, taking initiative, and developing responsibility. When invited to join the founding committee of Heartwood Public Charter School, she discovered a group of likeminded educators wanting an alternate public choice for local families. Lyn believes that Heartwood will provide the opportunities for children to learn about themselves, while learning about the world around them, that will guide them to be mindful, conscientious community members.

Courtney Vashaw, M.Ed., CAGS, is a mother, educator, activist, artist, and lifelong resident of the North Country of NH. She received her undergraduate degrees in Sociology and English, with a focus on Educational Policy and Law and disparity in educational opportunities from the University of NH. Upon graduation, she continued at UNH and went on to pursue her M.Ed. in Secondary English Teaching. After eight years teaching English and Social Sciences in public and private schools around the North Country, she pursued and earned her CAGS in Curriculum Administration/Principal Certification at Plymouth State University. She spent the following seven years as an assistant principal, principal, data and grants coordinator at Profile School where she focused on school culture development, social capital development, and personalized learning.

While taking time off from working full-time to recover from cancer, she was able to enroll her preschool son at the Sunnybrook Montessori School, thus learning about the beauty of Montessori education. This unexpected gift has helped shift her perspective on education.

She is proud to be the acting president of the Sunnybrook Montessori Board. Additionally, she is an active participant and Board member of the Upstage Players in Littleton, NH, works as a freelance writer and editor, and does community development work with the town of Whitefield. She has recently designed and taught curriculum for at-risk youth, served on countless panels about education in the North Country, and is currently teaching Middle School Humanities at the Waterford School in Waterford, VT.

Stacey Zemla, is a mother, an artist, a dreamer and a native of Lancaster, who recently returned back home to raise her family and is happy to call Coös county her home.

Prior to settling down in her hometown, she studied fine arts at the Maine College of Art, where she earned her BFA in Graphic Design. After college, Stacey served as an AmeriCorps volunteer with University of VT extension, where she spent two years designing and implementing science and technology curriculum for youth-at-risk in the Northeast Kingdom of VT; it was during this time that she realized her love for teaching and decided to go back to school.

In 2005, Stacey enrolled in the Visual Arts Education program at Tufts University, where she earned her MAT and fulfilled her practicum in Boston area schools. Over the years, Stacey has taught and worked with youth in a range of ages and a variety of contexts: she's been a coach,

a counselor, a teacher, a nanny and an instructor. Stacey holds certifications to teach art in both MA and NH, and she fondly remembers teaching art to middle school students for several years.

Stacey is grateful to be staying at home to care for her young children. She serves on the Sunnybrook Montessori School board, where her eldest child is currently enrolled. She makes time to practice her art whenever she can and works as a freelance graphic designer.

Appendix B: Expenditure Budget

Appendix C: Sample Head of School Description

Summary: Opening in the fall of 2019 with a Kindergarten, mixed grade classroom with 1st and 2nd grade, and a 3rd grade classroom, Heartwood Public Charter School is a publicly-funded Place-based Charter elementary school in Lancaster, New Hampshire. In the years to come our school will expand until we reach full operation, serving up to 108 students grades K through 8.

Location: Lancaster is a rural community in the Northern White Mountains of NH and considered the gateway to the Great North Woods Region of the state. Lancaster is known for its outdoor recreation (snowmobiling, hiking, and cross country skiing), and the natural beauty of the region, as well as its quaint Main Street and up-and-coming small businesses. Lancaster is now also home to the region's first alternative education model charter school! With so much excitement and anticipation, Heartwood Public Charter School looks forward to tapping into the area's rich and diverse cultural framework as we build our student population and establish strong community connections.

Position Opening/Description:

Heartwood Public Charter School is seeking a Head of School to serve as its philosophical and instructional leader. The ideal candidate will have a passionate commitment to providing place-based education hold a minimum a Bachelor's degree and have experience as a leader in an established school. Additionally, our ideal candidate will demonstrate an understanding of charter school law.

Knowledge of:

- Alternative educational frameworks in private and public school settings
- Charter school law is preferred
- Place-based education experience

Essential Functions:

- Provide Leadership to our school community
- Nurture a school culture consistent with our Place/nature based pedagogy
- Staff supervision and budget management

Working Conditions/Environment:

- Office and classroom environments both indoors and outdoors
- School yard and playgrounds
- Our community and natural spaces

Title: Head of School

Immediate Supervisor: Heartwood Public Charter School Board of Trustees

Additional Qualifications:

- Strong advocate for alternative public education.
- Outdoor experience or willingness to work in an outdoor classroom.
- Administrator/Principal certification and/or experience is highly desirable
- Strong leadership skills
- Experience/Involvement in creating an organization and monitoring sustainability
- Proven experience with staff supervision and budget management
- Highly self-motivated
- Strong written and verbal communication skills

Appendix D: Friends of the Charter

We have identified the following friends of Heartwood Public Charter School who have agreed to volunteer or advise in their areas of expertise. These people are volunteers, won't cost the school money, and will pass background checks if necessary. We are also very fortunate to have several educators among our Founding Trustees. As we work to get established, we will continue to formalize relationships with professionals and institutions in our community, in hopes that these partnerships will provide meaningful contributions to our students, educators and curriculum.

Melissa Grella, the founder and director of Taproot Farm & Environmental Education Center.

Peter Powell, a local realtor, who is invested in revitalizing our community.

Marissa Rexford, an advocate for varied educational opportunities and parent of a potential student.

Jay Riff, a local lawyer.

Zeanny Egea, a Spanish language teacher.

Herb Randall, an advocate for varied educational opportunities.

Christine Forest, a special education teacher.

Steve Zemla, an architectural engineer, who can assist with plans for our facilities.

Susan Vigne, founder and former director of Aurora School in Middlebury, VT. An educator and an advocate for varied educational opportunities.

Gerry Tobin, a retired Montessori teacher and potential board member.

David Sobel, an inspirational educator and author who has advised us.

Sarah Anderson, is another inspirational educator and author who has provided us with guidance.

Anne Stires, is the director and founder of the Juniper Hill School and possible consultant for incorporating risk into our curriculum.

Alfie-Eden Kerr, Program Administrator at Mountain Village Charter School in Plymouth, NH.

Lyndon State College, a potential student teacher collaborating resource.

Plymouth State College, a potential student teacher collaborating resource.

Taproot Farm & Environmental Education Center, a like minded organization interested in collaboration.

Juniper Hill School, a Place-based private school to connect with and learn from.

Southwest Charter School, a Place-based charter school to connect with and learn from.

Antioch University, a resource for Place-based teacher and staff training.

Fiddleheads Charter School, a Place-based charter school to connect with and learn from.

Jaime Schmidt and family, advocates for varied educational opportunities and a potential Heartwood family.

